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THE

# Commonweal

*Courting Africa and Asia*

## Castro and the Neutrals

by Edward B. Glick

*History in the Making*

## The Negro Awakening

by Bob Senser

*MAGIC FOR FUTURE MEMORY: A POEM . . by Margery Barnett*
*A YIDDISH GREAT . . . . . by Thomas Curley*
*PROBLEM NOVEL . . . . . by Martin Tucker*
*VINTAGE WHITE . . . . . by Max Cosman*
*AMERICAN IN THE HOUSE . . . . . by Michael Novak*
*DAUGHTER OF EVE: A POEM . . . . . by Sister Mary Honora*

ume LXXIII, No. 4 October 21, 1960 Twenty-Five Cents

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# The Commonweal Approach

OF ALL THE EFFORTS that have been made to summarize this magazine's point of view, perhaps the thumbnail description that comes the closest to the truth remains the statement that The Commonweal represents "not a movement but an attitude."

That attitude is a Catholic attitude, and The Commonweal is generally referred to as a Catholic publication, although it is not, to use the term people apply to diocesan papers and magazines published by religious communities, an "official" Catholic publication. Rather, The Commonweal is, quite simply, a magazine published by men who are themselves Catholic and who endeavor to express a point of view on temporal matters in conformity with their religious principles. . . .

Since the editors of this magazine are laymen, its primary concern is with the temporal order, which is the specific province of the layman. In the light of their religious beliefs, the editors see the temporal order as being directly related to the spiritual, and their day-to-day judgments reflect this conviction.

Add to this the further fact that contributors to The Commonweal include many of the world's ablest Catholic writers, and it is not hard to see what distinguishes this magazine from comparable "secular" journals and why the magazine is generally thought of as Catholic. But there is nothing more "officially" Catholic about The Commonweal than this, and the editors have always gone to some lengths to make this fact quite clear. . . .

There is no secret about the fact that The Commonweal frequently represents a minority point of view—or at least a point of view quite different from that found in many diocesan papers and Catholic magazines. For example, the editors were —and are—unable to share the enthusiasm of most American Catholic publications for Generalissimo Franco. In Father Coughlin's era The Commonweal saw his *Social Justice* as intolerant and totalitarian in spirit, and said so. More recently, while some "official" Catholic publications heaped praise on Senator McCarthy and scorn upon his critics, the editors of this magazine viewed his "crusade" in a context of national fear and self-doubt and felt it had little to do with any rational means of dealing with the Communist threat.

That our opinions on such public questions drew criticisms and disagreement from other Catholics did not surprise us. . . . There is nothing extraordinary about the fact that Catholics frequently disagree on specific questions of the day. Indeed, the only extraordinary thing would be if this were not the case. But what is disturbing is the way some Catholics try to elevate personal judgments on passing events or political figures into dogmas of orthodoxy which all must hold if they are not to be labeled "pseudo" or "so-called" Catholics.

—from the 35th Anniversary issue


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THE
# Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

## week by week

### CANDIDATES ON TELEVISION

THE SECOND in the series of direct television exchanges between Vice President Nixon and Senator Kennedy apparently did little to change voter opinions about the contest or the candidates. The situation is much as it was before—but that situation is markedly different from the way it is frequently described.

One of the great clichés of the 1960 campaign is that there is little difference between the two candidates and, therefore, little interest in the contest itself. There would be no great harm in this passing cliché and its variants if they had not, following a kind of Gresham's law of political debate, served to drive sound and sensible discussion out of the market place and to allow prejudice to serve for reason. One of the great values of the television confrontations is that they are dispelling the clichés and myths that have clouded so much of the commentary to date.

One can still readily make a list of things that are lacking in the T.V. debates so far. They are not, for example, truly debates, nor are the candidates allowed to cross-question each other. Again, the program is too short for incisive discussion of any single issue. Further, when flat contradictions arise there is no provision for resolving the contradictions; whoever has the last word appears to win the dispute. And one could add to this list.

It would be a mistake, however, to emphasize the limitations and overlook the real importance and the profound significance of the debates and their aftermath. The T.V. debates provide much of what one would posit as an ideal. The two opponents are brought face to face, within range of the same questions, before a nationwide audience. It becomes difficult, though not impossible, as Mr. Nixon demonstrated in his comments on civil rights, to rely overmuch upon regional appeal. Under the intense pressures of the confrontation both men have been led to make sharper statements on politically potent questions such as foreign policy, civil rights and higher taxes. And these differences will be sharpened as the campaign progresses.

THE RESPONSE to the debates has done much to dispel the belief that voters are unenthusiastic or uncommitted. Many of the people interviewed expressed definite preferences for one candidate or the other, preferences which existed before the debates. A good number have yet to make up their minds, but according to their statements they are withholding judgment not out of apathy but out of interest without commitment. The great crowds that regularly greet both Mr. Nixon and Mr. Kennedy, even in what were considered unlikely places, scarcely support the idea that the electorate has little interest in the campaign.

What is now emerging, as much as different attitudes toward particular basic issues, is a general difference in attitude and approach toward all the grave problems which our country faces today. Put most simply, Mr. Nixon says that things have never been better at home, that our foreign policy is effective, that our prestige relative to that of the Communist world has never been higher, and that we can and will do better. Mr. Kennedy, on the other hand, dwells on the disagreeable truths that our economy has pockets of depression, that our farm surpluses are high while many Americans still do not have sufficient food. He says further that our foreign policy needs to be thoroughly examined and revised; that our prestige, according to most informed commentators, Republican and Democratic, has been gradually slipping and can be recouped only at the cost of determined and concentrated effort.



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In the highly significant areas of foreign relations Mr. Kennedy is more strongly supported by the facts and by responsible spokesmen of both parties. In domestic affairs both speak within the traditions of their respective parties, with all the strengths and weaknesses attendant upon each. In spite of Mr. Nixon's attempt to forego party labels as the basis for voting he has done remarkably well in winning the support of figures as different as Senator Barry Goldwater and Governor Rockefeller, and has policies which are as divided as that support suggests. Mr. Kennedy must deal with the problem perennial to Democratic candidates, roughly the liberal North and the conservative South. These difficulties affect their approach to domestic problems. But here too the differences are being sharpened, and the T.V. debates are a welcome additional means of revealing these differences to the voters.

## A CHURCH IN TRAVAIL

CONDITIONS for Cuban Catholics appear to have deteriorated since the pastoral letter of the Cuban hierarchy two months ago. This was a letter warmly commending the Castro regime for its efforts on behalf of the common good: the agrarian reform, industrialization, new opportunities for employment, low-cost housing projects, the building of schools and hospitals and the provision of recreational facilities for the poor. In sharp contrast the Cuban bishops condemned the regime's continual eulogy of Communism, a system which deprives the people of the truth, employs terroristic police methods, enslaves the worker, seeks to break down the family and in general is guilty of the violation of inalienable human rights. At the same time the pastoral cited Communist methods of weakening the Church, from government takeover of her charitable and educational works to the imprisonment of bishops.

Last August's pastoral strongly criticized the Castro regime for its constant eulogy of such a system; it did not deal directly with the difficulties which the Church has been encountering in Cuba now for more than a year. When a country moves more and more in the direction of all-out dictatorship, restrictions multiply. Government control of the means of communication becomes absolute; the people get only the official version of things over the radio, on T.V. and in the press. A few weeks ago Castro officials closed down the two remaining Catholic T.V. and radio programs. That

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which National Catholic Organizations sent out over T.V. on Saturdays was supported by individual contributions. The program featured speakers on social rights. It was suppressed for "implicit criticism of the policy of the revolutionary government," and symbolically that first Saturday pictures of the Castro-Khrushchev meeting in New York took its place.

More recently Archbishop Serantes of Santiago has issued a pastoral letter which declares that the Castro regime is making "great strides" in destroying the influence of the Catholic Church. It denies that the Church in Cuba is under Francoist influence and points out that most of Castro's companions in his struggle to overthrow Batista were Catholics. The danger is that Communism will reap the fruits of the victory. The Archbishop declares that Cuban churches have suffered deliberate profanation on a number of recent occasions. In view of such harassments and other signs of a more sweeping dictatorship—together with the present paramount influence of Soviet Russia and the Chinese in the Castro government—the Church in Cuba faces an increasingly arduous prospect.

## G.E. STRIKE

FOR MONTHS it has been obvious that the national climate of labor-management relations has been worsening. The attitude of both sides in the General Electric strike provides another demonstration of this fact.

On the surface the issues seem routine enough. The five-year contract between the International Union of Electrical Workers, A.F.L.-C.I.O., and General Electric has run its term. In negotiating for a new contract, the union's chief demand was economic: it asked a wage increase of 3½% for each year of a two-year contract, and asked that the cost-of-living increase from the old contract be retained. The company wanted a three-year contract; it offered a 3% raise immediately and 4% in eighteen months—but it also insisted that the cost-of-living clause be eliminated from the new contract.

The two positions are quite far apart. Nonetheless, bigger differences have been settled elsewhere countless times before, without getting even close to a strike. But the general atmosphere that has surrounded the G.E. negotiations was such that the strike came as no surprise.

Management claims that union leaders are trying to use their power to force "unwarranted concessions" and says the company would be damaged more by yielding to "unresponsible demands" than by suffering a long and costly strike. The union on its side is convinced that management is more interested in trying to break the union than in negotiating the issues. Both sides are reported to regard the strike as the "showdown" between company and union, and the violence that marred the picketing during the first week is an unhappy portent for the future. We would be glad if events prove us wrong, but we fear the G.E. strike is going to be a bad one.

## DISCRIMINATION AND QUEENS COLLEGE

NEW YORKERS are distressed by the open dispute between the New York Board of Higher Education and the administration of Queens College, on one side, and the State Commission Against Discrimination, on the other. The matter under dispute is the existence of religious discrimination, specifically anti-Catholic discrimination, at Queens College.

Allegations of religious bias at Queens have been made for years, but as often as they have been made they have been denied. Complaints have been made concerning discriminatory practices in hiring, reappointing and promoting Catholics, but the complainants—Catholic war veterans, teachers associations and other groups—have been consistently overruled, and often in such a way as to perpetuate the resentment of those who made the charges.

A Board of Higher Education "Committee of Six" was formed to investigate the charges of bias at Queens, but its findings—that the allegations were completely unfounded—were immediately denounced as a "whitewash" by the Catholic groups involved, who maintained that there were misleading presentations of testimony and other deficiencies in the Committee's report. While the State Commission Against Discrimination was pursuing its own investigation, further unfortunate incidents occurred. The Queens College student newspaper published material which was found offensive and bigoted not only by the Catholic groups mentioned but by Mayor Wagner and New York's Commission on Intergroup Relations. The Board of Higher Education, however, resisted urgings from all these quarters that it take some action in the case.

Recently, as the two-year S.C.A.D. investigation was nearing completion, the board challenged the jurisdiction of the Commission over its employment practices and obtained an injunction in the New York Supreme Court to stay the investigation. Now



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the state agency has asked that the stay be vacated and has announced the results of its inquiry.

Briefly and simply, S.C.A.D. reported that it had found evidence of bias in Queens College against the employment and promotion of Catholic teachers. Among the evidence cited was the fact that out of a total staff of 425 at the College, only twenty-two Catholics had teaching positions with tenure, eight had non-teaching positions with tenure, and fifteen had non-permanent appointments.

The president of Queens College and the Board of Higher Education continue to deny any religious discrimination whatsoever at the College. The board continues to argue that, in the first place, S.C.A.D. has no jurisdiction over teacher employment and, in the second place, the S.C.A.D. report is false, being based on "misleading and even false statistics," hearsay and the like.

There the matter stands. However it turns out, the whole business has been and is a source of resentment and bitterness on both sides, and perhaps particularly on the part of Catholics, in this area and elsewhere. One tries not to jump to conclusions about a confused and complicated sequence of events but, even apart from the specifics in this case, there are grounds for Catholic distress.

Perhaps there are ample explanations for the episodes which have arisen, but surely it is not sufficient simply to dismiss out of hand the complaints and the evidence which have been put forward. For us, the most disquieting aspect of the case is the apparent lack of liberal interest in charges of discrimination against Catholics. The agencies involved have achieved a reputation for objectivity and careful work, and their findings in cases of discrimination against Jews and Negroes are ordinarily given respect and support as a matter of course. Catholics can hardly be blamed if they recall the maxim of Peter Viereck that "anti-Catholicism is the anti-Semitism of the liberals."

Catholics have a responsibility not to be overly-sensitive, not to imagine that their religion, rather than possible real personal shortcomings, is the cause of their every frustration and rebuff. But non-Catholics too have a responsibility, to reexamine their assumptions in relation to Catholics, to give their statements the weight and credence they would give to the opinions of any other American, to make sure that their "liberalism" does not include tacit "exceptions." As in the controversy over the religion of Senator Kennedy, now rocking the national equilibrium, it is not the Catholic community which is displaying immaturity, inconsistency, or even bigotry.

## KNEEL-IN DEMONSTRATIONS

MUCH has been written about the lunch counter demonstrations and the various sit-ins by Negroes in the South. So far there has been relatively little discussion of the kneel-in demonstrations, perhaps because they are still not widespread.

"Kneel-ins" are exactly what they sound like. In such demonstrations Negroes simply enter a church which follows a segregationist policy and take their places in the pews. There by their very presence they confront the Christian conscience with a concrete, flesh-and-blood test on the crucial moral issue of racism and segregation. In the light of this, a statement on the kneel-in movement by the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Human Relations Association is of particular interest.

". . . When Negroes in the past have come to such houses of worship where white Christians were assembled," the Lutheran statement said, "they were not only exercising their God-given prerogative but also presenting to the Church an opportunity to express the oneness of all men in Adam and the unity of all men through Jesus Christ. . . . We condemn as loveless the practice of Christian people of withholding from Negroes or other non-whites their prerogative according to the will of God to be identified with the Christian community in public worship, to use the Sacraments, to enjoy the fellowship of the Church and thus to confess their need for both the mercy of God and membership in the body of Christ.

"As we confess our guilt in the Church's corporate sin expressed in exclusiveness, racial pride, and silence in the face of injustice—sins that have mounted in the church over the years, creating an atmosphere of coldness and hostility and necessitating such movements as the current 'kneel-ins'—we call upon all our fellow Christians to join us in this our confession of guilt and expression of repentance, trusting that, in Christ, God will have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and give us His Spirit more fully to combat and overcome them. . . . We encourage our Negro neighbors and Negro fellow Christians to render a needed service to our country and the Church by worshiping with their white neighbors and fellow Christians, so that the ignominy which has come upon us by our divisiveness may be removed, our country regain its good name as a freedom-loving people, and, above all, the name of Jesus Christ be not blasphemed among the nations."

There is, we think, nothing we can add to this moving statement of Christian conscience.



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# Castro and the Neutrals

*By concentrating on Cuba's pro-Soviet drift, we risk overlooking Castro's interest in Africa and Asia*

by EDWARD B. GLICK

THE CASTRO Revolution is the first real political and social upheaval (as opposed to a mere change in régime) to have occurred in Latin America since the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Perhaps for that reason alone, Cuba's present anti-North Americanism, like Mexico's in the twenties and thirties, should surprise no one. Nor should one be surprised that Premier Fidel Castro has been playing so good a game of you-scratch-my-back-and-I'll-scratch-yours with the Russians. For by demonstrating economic and political friendship with the Soviet bloc, he also demonstrates his enmity to and independence from "Yankee imperialism."

But by constantly stressing his more newsworthy relations with the giants of the East and West, we have overlooked Castro's attitude toward Africa and Asia, potentially the two most important areas of the world. The fact is that the "Maximum Leader" of the Cuban Revolution, perhaps spurred on by his confidant, Major Ernesto (Che) Guevara, and Dr. Raul Roa, his foreign minister, has been strengthening his ties to Afro-Asia and adding a measure of Nasser-like neutralism to the already publicized pro-Soviet and anti-United States elements of his foreign policy.

Both Guevara and Roa have travelled widely in the interests of Cuban foreign policy. Guevara, head of the National Bank of Cuba, spent the summer of 1959 in Asia and Africa, where he got on particularly well with Nasser. Besides negotiating a commercial treaty with the U.A.R., he discussed the creation of a joint shipping company, the construction of a textile mill in Cuba and a sugar refinery in Egypt, to be financed by both governments. Roa visited North Africa and Europe, making it a point to stop in Yugoslavia. He held talks with Tito and Foreign Minister Koca Popovic and arranged an exchange of visits between Tito and Castro "when possibilities permit."

Mr. Glick is a social scientist now on the staff of the System Development Corp.

Guevara and Roa returned from their peregrinations convinced that Cuba must speedily expand her trade and diplomatic relations. In September 1959, months before Mikoyan's pilgrimage to Havana, Guevara foretold the outcome of the pilgrimage by declaring that Cuba could sell more sugar in hitherto closed or limited outlets if she took part of the price in products instead of in United States dollars. Earlier, in a Havana television interview, he urged diplomatic ties with Russia and all countries. "If we maintain diplomatic relations with our enemies such as the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua," he asked, "why should we not maintain relations with those who combat our enemies?"

Roa fully supports Guevara's views on extra-regional trade, but as Minister of State he has been more active in enlarging Cuban diplomatic representation abroad. The Cuban chargé in Cairo has been promoted to ambassador. Eugenio Soler-Alonso, formerly director of the U.N. Information Office in New Delhi, is Cuba's new and first ambassador to India. Diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level are also being established with Communist China, Yugoslavia, Pakistan, Ceylon, Indonesia, the Philippines, Ghana, Tunisia, Morocco, and other Afro-Asian countries.

CUBA IS NOT a new country. She became a republic almost sixty years ago. Unlike the countries that have recently achieved independence, she has no driving psycho-political need to demonstrate her newly acquired sovereignty. Certainly Cuba is signing trade agreements and exchanging ambassadors with countries where such ambassadors and agreements did not exist before. But these can hardly be just the normal manifestations of intercourse between nations necessary for their respective well-being. For all of these countries existed before Castro came to power and all of these new bilateral exchanges could have been made by the Batista régime. Yet they were not. If Cuba is suddenly seeking friends and trade in



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Africa and Asia—if she is changing her traditional political and economic alignments—it is because Castro has adopted a studied policy of showing solidarity with these countries.

There are few Russians living in Cuba, but with a Chinese colony of some thirty thousand, Cuba's relations with Communist China, whom she has just recognized, evokes interest. China has guaranteed to import half a million tons of Cuban sugar in 1960. For his part, Castro is permitting the establishment of a pro-Communist Chinese-language daily in Havana. Further, the two countries have been busy exchanging delegations of visiting firemen. Last spring, at about the time that Japan's Kabuki theatre visited New York, a Peiping opera troupe played in Havana. In August, 1959, Marshall Chen Yi, Communist China's Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister, received a group of Cuban women in Peiping; the following October five Cubans arrived there to participate in Red China's tenth anniversary celebrations. In July, 1959, just a few weeks after the Hsinhua (New China) News Agency had opened an office in Havana staffed by mainland Chinese, Yao Chen, Secretary of the Chinese Journalists Association, led a delegation to Cuba. Hsinhua works closely with Prensa Latina, a Latin American news service set up in Havana after the Fidelistas took power. The United States Central Intelligence Agency suspects it is Communist.

Red China's leaders make complimentary references to the Cuban revolution, and her radio and press constantly praise Castro and his anti-Americanism. Hardly a day passes without some Chinese commentator assuring "the Cuban people [that they] can count on the powerful support of the people of the world" against "United States imperialism." During the President's Latin American tour, Peiping broadcast that "Eisenhower is going to Latin America . . . to isolate Cuba from the rest of the Latin American nations [so as] to facilitate United States economic and military intervention against the regime of Fidel Castro."

IT IS IN THE U.N., however, that Cuba's Afro-Asian policy—Castro calls it "humanism," Roa calls it pursuing our "own road"—exposes itself so boldly. Early in the 1959 session of the General Assembly, the first ever attended by Castro delegates, Roa announced that "the new Cuba" would draw "closer to the underdeveloped peoples of Africa and Asia." Echoing neutralism, he proclaimed that "in the chess game of power politics, we shall never act as a docile pawn." "We neither admit nor accept," he said, "that we must inevitably elect between the capitalist and Communist solutions." Throughout the session his delegation acted and voted like a member of the Afro-Asian bloc.

Thus Cuba voted for the resolution asking France to cancel her atomic test in the Sahara. She took a pro-Arab stand in the Algerian debate, coming out for independence and voting for parleys between Paris and the rebel F.L.N. She backed the resolution on the denial of human rights in Tibet but also asked that Red China be permitted to present her side of the story. When the Assembly repeated its annual ritual of postponing the question of U.N. membership for Communist China, Cuba abstained—the first and only Latin American nation ever to do so. She has already announced that she will vote affirmatively at the 1960 session.

Now, the universality of membership in international organizations like the U.N. is a long-held Latin American ideal. As far back as forty years ago, Honorio Puerreydon of Argentina warned the first Assembly of the League of Nations that "the non-admission of certain countries might be the cause of dangerous antagonisms. . . . The strength of the League lies in the incorporation of the greatest number of members: the fewer the states outside it, the more numerous will be those submitted to its discipline. . . ." Substitute "U.N." for "League" and you have the current argument of many that membership in the U.N. might give Communist China some needed mellowness and restraint.

Many Latin American delegates privately admit that they favor Communist China's entry—but they quickly remind one that the issue is tied to the cold war and that the United States, both politically and emotionally, is heavily involved in the China question. What therefore makes Cuba's action especially important is that while other Central and South American countries *think* their convictions in this case, she is *voting* hers. With increasing difficulty, the wall of Washington's resistance to Red Chinese admission is held together chiefly by Latin American mortar. Who can now be sure that the wall won't collapse this year or next because of the tiny crack put into it not by Russia, Indonesia, Yugoslavia, India, or the U.A.R.—but by Castro's Cuba?

Another Latin American tradition in the U.N. is the caucus. The *latinos* have carried over their old League custom of frequent and somewhat formal meetings to try to agree on policies and candidates for Assembly vice-presidencies, committee chairmanships, and the Security Council. The General Assembly, under a so-called "gentleman's agreement" arrived at in 1946, automatically elects the Latin American candidates, as well as those submitted by the world's other major geographic groupings. (As last year's wrangle over Poland demonstrated, however, the United States now challenges the concept of an automatic "East European" seat among the non-permanent members of the Security Council, although Russia has long accepted the idea of having two Latin Americans on it.)

Here again, Castro's Cuba is acting like a maverick. Her U.N. delegation has notified all members of the organization that Cuba will seek the seat being vacated



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by Argentina in December. Breaking tradition, Cuba did not bother to submit her candidacy first to the Latin American caucus. But Chile did so. And should Latin America nominate Chile or any other country in the group except Cuba, and should Cuba choose to run anyway, it would certainly not endear her to her hemispheric neighbors. In fact, in such a case the mechanics if not the very purpose of the "gentleman's agreement" might be jeopardized.

CASTRO HAS BEEN called the Nasser of the Caribbean, and striking similarities do exist between the two men, who have scheduled visits to each other's capital. Both are young, ultranationalistic, proud, excitable, dynamic, unpredictable. Both are leading the first real social revolutions their countries have ever experienced. The Cairo newspaper *Al Akhbar* quotes Castro as saying that Nasser's coup was the inspiration for the Cuban rebellion against Batista and that Cuba was today feeling the same pressures applied to Egypt. "Like Nasser, I have been called a Communist . . .," said Castro. And like Nasser, who successfully defied the Western Powers by unilaterally nationalizing the Suez Canal, Castro is virtually expropriating United States-owned property in Cuba. Finally, to the dismay of some of their neighbors, both men presume to speak for their respective regions.

It can hardly be accidental, therefore, that Castro and Nasser have attracted each other politically, economically, and even emotionally. Nor can it be accidental that Castro asked Nasser—the living symbol of Afro-Asian neutralism, at least in the Arab world—to co-sponsor a Bandung-type conference of the underdeveloped countries. Invitations were sent to countries in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, excluding Communist China and Israel.

Latin America and the Arab-Afro-Asian East have much in common—poverty, exploding populations, nonwhite majorities, monoculture, underindustrialization, an almost paranoic nationalism bordering on jingoism. And yet almost all of Cuba's sister states declined to attend the Havana conference. Undoubtedly thinking of the conflict with President Juscelino Kubitschek's "Operation Pan America," the Foreign Minister of Brazil, Latin America's biggest country, told Castro's special envoys that the conference idea was both "unwise" and "inadvisable."

These rejections and demurrals reflect an increasing irritation (expressed at the recent Foreign Ministers conference in Costa Rica) with Castro's desire to be regarded as the *jefe político* of the region, at least by the outside world. Also, many Latin American statesmen, though they have their own complaints against the United States, did not like the implications they saw in Castro's "congress of hunger." For it represented a closer degree of political and psychological cooperation with Afro-Asian neutralism than Latin America is prepared to enter into at this time. To avoid embarrassment, Fidel Castro cancelled the conference.

The State Department's attitude toward Castro alternates between two convictions: that he is really an old-line Latin *caudillo* with a few new social twists, or else a burgeoning or actual Communist. He may be neither. Rather he may be something the Monroe Doctrine never envisaged: a twentieth century neutralist à la Tito or Nasser or Sukarno, who recently visited Cuba. Like Nasser, Castro gladly accepts arms and economic aid from the Sino-Soviet world. As is also true of Nasser, this does not in itself make him a Communist, though his revolution may eventually be captured by the communists around him. Instead, Castro's watchword is "neutralism" (a word with as many meanings as there are people using it), and one of his dreams may be to erect a Havana-Cairo-Belgrade-Jakarta Axis to lead the uncommitted nations unscathed through the terrors of a two-bloc world.

IT IS TRUE that Khrushchev is going to Cuba. But he also went to India, Burma, England, France—and the United States. Is it not significant, then, that of all the *other* heads of government, the ones that Castro seems most anxious to identify himself with are those that the rest of the world identifies with neutralism?

It can be argued that since the Afro-Asians' voting record at the U.N. and some of their policies outside it correspond with the views of the Soviet bloc, there is little difference between the two groups, and Cuba's attitudes are therefore as much pro-Soviet as they are pro-Afro-Asian. But those who so argue do not fully understand the nature of neutralism, Russia's interest in it, or Castro's affinity for it.

In the present world balance of power, Russia need not insist that the neutralists be for her. It is enough that they are not against her. So long as they do not, for example, grant bases to the U.S., Russia can usually support the whims and wishes of the Afro-Asians.

Moreover, while the Afro-Asian nations often take positions akin to those of the Soviets, they do so not because they are Soviet satellites. Their neutralism has a motivation and a dynamism all its own. These countries are colonies newly become independent. They like to project the image of themselves as a "third force" between capitalism and Communism. They are hungry, angry, nationalistic, non-white. Like the rest of us, they fear nuclear annihilation. Above all, they want to industrialize and they want to do it fast.

Given Castro's personality, his desire to show off his political manlihood to his powerful neighbor, Cuba's relatively underdeveloped state, and the fact that more than one out of every four Cubans is either a Negro, mulatto, or of Asian descent, is it really so surprising that Cuba today is drawing close to Afro-Asia?



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*"There is a new kind of Negro in the world today"*

# The Negro Awakening

by BOB SENSER

FOR DECADES proponents of segregation have held that Negroes are happy with "separate but equal" status, and that the periodic dissension is caused by outside agitators—Communists and such—appealing to a handful of malcontents. It is a comforting delusion and it's no wonder so many segregationists still cling to it. The only weakness in the argument, of course, is that Negroes *are* expressing opposition against segregation in many Southern cities where they once were silent. Yesterday it was Montgomery and Greensboro and Nashville. Today it is Jacksonville and Atlanta and New Orleans. Tomorrow it may be Vicksburg or Savannah or Shreveport. Almost any city or town may be the scene of the next demand for equality.

At a civil rights rally that was held immediately prior to the Republican National Convention in Chicago this summer, Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, declared: "There is a new kind of Negro in this world today—he can read and he can understand." The predominantly Negro crowd in Liberty Baptist Church responded with a firm *Amen,* and went on to punctuate each of his following sentences with an *Amen:* "Once we were out on the plantation or in the woods somewhere. We didn't know what was going on. But today the news gets around. It's a new world, and a new Negro."

The speech, and the crowd's vigorous response to it, confirmed the revised lyrics of "The Old Grey Mare," as sung by some Negro students in the South: "The ol' Negro just ain't what he usta be. . . . Darn sight better now."

Once a Roy Wilkins could be blamed for the "trouble" that existed. Today the "trouble-maker" may be a Negro seamstress riding home from work on a bus, a tobacco worker sitting in a back pew at church, a gas station attendant well versed in the customary obsequiousness, or a college student heretofore content merely to study about democracy. Almost any Negro may spark the next rebellion.

The wall of segregation has been high enough to keep most whites ignorant of the aspirations of their colored fellow-citizens. But the wall has not been high enough to keep Negroes from assimilating the American way of life, and this assimilation is the basic cause of the current rebellion.

DESPITE the lag in their education, income, and housing, Negroes are more like whites than most whites realize. Negroes here do not have African names, nor do they speak an African language; they adopted the white man's names, his language, and even his religions. Bit by bit, they absorbed the culture of the white majority. They drive the same cars, see the same movies, use the same school textbooks. Even a Negro magazine like *Ebony* is amazingly like *Life.* It was only logical that eventually Negroes would become restive in a setting that gave them their whole culture but which set rigid limits for failure to pass the color test. The question was not whether but when they would raise a massive protest.

Why did the awakening happen at this point in history? For many reasons, national and international. Among the domestic reasons, for example, is the awakening of the white conscience, which has given many Negroes confidence in the rightness of their demands. And not to be minimized as a stimulant to the Negro are the fast-changing world events reported in the press and over the air waves.

African nationalism has been an important spur to Negro awakening in the U.S. Over television Negroes have seen and heard dozens of black leaders from Africa, articulate men, aggressive men, confident men. From their activities Dr. Martin Luther King, among others, has captured a sense of destiny. Says Dr. King: "All peoples deprived of dignity and freedom are on the march on every continent throughout the world." Thus, many Negro leaders today have that all-important ingredient for the success of any movement—the sense that history is on their side.

The world situation has served as a spur in another way. As the Communist nations and the Western nations confront each other on cold war battlegrounds, U.S. orators and commentators have felt called upon to distinguish our side from the Communists' by em-

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phasizing and re-emphasizing that, in contrast to nations that neither preach nor practice freedom, ours is a "free" nation and belongs to the "free" world. Negroes, after all, do have ears to hear such remarks, and would have to be grossly insentitive to avoid applying them to the condition of segregation. For Negroes, the speeches about America's glorious freedom serve as more than exercises in self-congratulation; they have an educational impact that may express itself simply in a sneer ("Oh, yeah, who says Mississippi is free?") or in a desire to share that glorious freedom more fully.

SO FAR, the recent Southern protests have failed to sweep the North. In Chicago for example, during the height of the Dixie sit-in demonstrations, small groups of Negroes and whites did man sympathy picket lines at certain chain varieties stores that have Southern branches. Ironically, however, many of these Chicago stores are completely integrated, even in their sales personnel, while just around the corner are banks, insurance companies, and other businesses that systematically exclude Negroes from all but menial jobs. Not a picket has strolled past their doorways.

The image of a Negro as a person happy with his lot under segregation is a stereotype, but so is the image of a Negro army made up of leaders and followers all unselfishly dedicated to an unrelenting struggle for integration. Within the Negro community itself pressures for integration constantly collide with counter-pressures for segregation. A University of Chicago social scientist, James Q. Wilson, writes in his new book *Negro Politics: The Search For Leadership* (Free Press, $5): "Contrary to the common view that the Negro community has a high degree of unity and a strong sense of purpose at least in the area of race relations, there are here as much diversity and as many conflicts as one would expect to find in any large community."

In 1958 and 1959, before "sit-ins" became a national byword, Wilson studied the leadership of Chicago's 800,000 Negroes, with side glances at New York, Los Angeles, and other Northern cities for comparative purposes. Since human aspirations are shot through with ambivalence, it should hardly be surprising that Wilson found among Negro leaders much ambivalence even on matters affecting their own rights. Some of the signs: security in the status quo *versus* uncertainty over possible change; racial solidarity and dedicated idealism *versus* self-seeking and jealousy; striving for "welfare" goals (e.g., more hospital facilities, even though they be all-Negro) *versus* striving for "status" goals (e.g., integrated hospitals); maintaining fixed public positions ("racial quotas are immoral") *versus* making concessions in private ("quotas are necessary for stability").

In Chicago, at least, Negroes stand firmly together in the general conviction that racial discrimination must go, and they rally against clearcut cases of discrimination—anti-Negro violence, specific cases of job bias, exclusion from public accommodations. "But the issues which are coming to the fore in Chicago race relations," Wilson points out, "are no longer so simple, and it is on these which Negro leaders are being asked to act." On complex issues the Negro reaction is weakened by disunity, lukewarmness, and frustration, and it is unlikely that this situation is peculiar to Chicago.

Take housing. Since 1940 Chicago has seen a great increase in the number of housing units available to Negroes, but in Wilson's terms this has been only a "welfare" victory, for the increase came about through "the glacial expansion of the Negro area along its own periphery." Today there is widespread oral adherence to the need for interracial neighborhoods and the need for an open occupancy law. But Wilson's image of a glacier is fitting, for with very few exceptions neither Negroes nor whites see anything they can do about breaking away from the pattern. "An open occupancy ordinance," Wilson writes, "is not yet 'good politics' in Chicago; too few constituents [Negro or white] are concerned about it, too few will benefit from it in any immediate sense, and too many people will be upset by it."

All of this may sound not unfamiliar elsewhere in the North. Indeed, an unreflective reading of Wilson's book would give the impression that the Negro's position in a great Northern city like Chicago is hopelessly stagnant, and that significant progress is improbable in the near future. The evidence for pessimism is plentiful, in Chicago and elsewhere.

If teams of social scientists had gone through Marshall, Texas, Greensboro, North Carolina, and other sit-in cities a year ago, however, how many of them would have detected a sign of the rebellion that was to come? Who, whatever his skills, could have predicted that the plans hatched by a relatively small group of students would soon be debated, and then endorsed, by two national political conventions before the eyes of millions of T.V. watchers? Who could have foreseen that, in a fantastically short time, lunch counters would be desegregated in one hundred Southern cities?

THE DYNAMISM of future change is often elusive. The hazard of prediction in this uncharted area is illustrated by a view that Wilson attributes to one Negro leader. This leader doubted that a Chicago Negro family would, by itself, without other Negro families, move into the outlying suburb of Park Forest even if offered the opportunity—and at the time even the opportunity seemed out of the question. "One Negro," he said, "wouldn't want to go that far alone,



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but six or twelve might." But the fact is that even before Wilson's book was published, one Negro family, without the company of other Negroes, did move in.

Northern cities like Chicago can not be insulated from the civil rights stirrings elsewhere. The changes there may continue in a very slow and piecemeal way, but who knows?—a real rebellion may start in some simple way such as the sit-ins. A person in the grandstand at the ball park may start wondering seriously why Negroes can play on its football and baseball field but can not work as vendors in the stands. Or somebody may become nettled by the fact that although Negroes can now eat downtown without discrimination, most restaurants have a rigid color line in employment. Rightly timed, a protest against even minor discrimination could produce a strong local civil rights movement. The potential for rebellion is there, and awaits only the right moment.

In all probability the concessions of recent years—even the wholesale integration of lunch-counters—will not bring an end to the Negro's civil rights demands. The very fact that conditions are improving is likely to lead to demands that they improve even more, North and South. The remarks of Alexis de Tocqueville are pertinent:

"It is not always when things are going from bad to worse that revolutions break out. . . . Patiently endured so long as it seemed beyond redress, a grievance comes to appear intolerable once the possibility of removing it crosses men's minds. For the mere fact that certain abuses have been remedied draws attention to others and they now appear more galling."

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**POLITICS BEHIND THE SCENES**

# Olympic Sideshow

by GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

THE OLYMPIC GAMES have to be kept out of politics, of course, and the Olympic Games in Rome were kept out of politics. Yet their political importance here has been enormous. As it turned out, they have considerably strengthened Christian Democracy within Italy and increased the country's prestige abroad.

A month before the games started, that is in July, the Italian Communists tried something which came very close to blackmail. The pretext was a congress to be held in Genoa by the Neo-Fascists, who make up a small and unimportant party in Italy, without funds and without effective leaders. As a matter of fact, they are not really taken seriously by the Italians, who consider them a sort of comic survival from the past. The Neo-Fascists supported the Christian Democratic government at the time, and this was all of a sudden considered intolerable by the Communists. The Neo-Fascists had supported Christian Democratic governments before, which at the time had caused only routine Communist protests as a matter of principle. But now, just before the Olympic Games, this situation was declared intolerable by the Communists, and violent demonstrations were staged all over Italy.

The Tambroni government became clearly nervous. It was obviously afraid that the Communist demonstrations would delay the preparations for the games or frighten away visitors. The police betrayed their nervousness too, and their reactions to the Communist provocations were exaggerated on more than one occasion, with shots fired and people killed and wounded. This was apparently just what the Communists wanted, and Italy seemed suddenly on the verge of civil war.

The Communists tried to make the utmost of their opportunity, to break out of their deadly isolation and provoke the fall of the government. The government was weak, it had been extremly difficult to form it, and a permanent crisis or new elections on short notice seemed to be the only alternative to civil war. Visitors to the Olympic Games began to cancel their reservations when the government fell, and the Communists began to celebrate a victory. The future looked as bleak as could be.

Then the miracle happened. In a very short time a Christian Democratic government was formed by Amintore Fanfani including the best known and most experienced members of the party, and it found support on the left and the right from three smaller parties with clean democratic records: the Social-Democrats, the Liberals and the Republicans. Almost overnight Italy had the best government which could be thought of in the circumstances. The Olympic Games were saved and proved to be a great success. Against this background the government started at once on a series

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of international negotiations, and since De Gasperi's times Italy has not had a better international position.

Thus the apparent Communist victory turned out to be a bitter defeat. The Communists had provoked the fall of the government they attacked, but the new government was many times stronger than the old, and they found themselves even more isolated than before. In consequence, the Communists launched a campaign against the government and the Church which has broken all records in falsity and viciousness.

The Communists' strength on earlier occasions had been that they had attacked the government on really weak points. Now they seemed to have lost all sense of proportion. The installations for the Olympic Games, which had already won the admiration of foreign visitors, were violently criticized as megalomaniac, inefficient and ugly. The Vatican was attacked for "real estate speculations on a gigantic scale." The reason was that a new broad road was built through the western parts of Rome behind the Vatican, in order to connect the Olympic installations in the northern part of the town with the installations in the southern part. This road runs through a very quiet part of the city, where religious institutions of different nationalities have gathered in great numbers throughout the centuries. Now the quiet was gone, but on the other hand the value of the real estate had risen, owing to the better roads. That was the Vatican's "real estate speculations on a gigantic scale." When it was objected that there was no way to connect the northern part of the installations with the southern part except through this area, the Communists retorted that the Vatican had been farsighted enough to divide the installations for precisely that reason.

THE NEXT move by the Communists was to accuse the Vatican of preparing "clerical propaganda" for the sportsmen from all over the world who were gathering in Rome. They seemed to fear this "clerical propaganda" particularly among the visitors from the Communist countries. As nobody was able to discover anything which could be described as "clerical propaganda," the Communists switched around and declared that their vigilance had prevented the Vatican from launching its propaganda campaign.

Later, when the visitors arrived in great numbers, this Communist sensitivity to "clerical propaganda" had its explanation. A considerable number of visitors from the Communist countries landed in Roman convents! Many convents had been called upon to put their facilities for accommodation at the disposal of the visitors. Such lodging is not very luxurious, but it is quiet, the food is healthy, and above all it is cheap. A great number of visitors, regardless of their religious convictions, preferred to live in the pilgrims' quarters in religious institutions. That so many visitors from the Communist countries landed there was due to the fact that most travelers from these countries receive only a very small allowance of Western currency and are compelled to find the cheapest accommodations.

One big group of Soviet Russians was lodged in a school of the Salesian Fathers in the suburbs of Rome. The Russians were extremely friendly and polite, and quite satisfied with the pilgrims' fare and quarters. It was only when the Russians through their interpreter wanted to be especially friendly and said that after all Christ was a Communist too that the rector objected strongly, and even more so the sisters in the kitchen. Obviously the Russians did not understand that this comparison did not appeal to their landlords. At any rate, from that moment onwards the relations were rather cool, although completely correct to the very end.

A group of Czech visitors, however, who had been put up in another religious institution in Rome, found the accommodation much too primitive for their taste, went away indignant and were finally placed in small hotels, although they had to pay considerably more than they had planned. These visitors, belonging to the "new class," more and more noticeable in the Communist countries, were obviously used to a very good living. What was good enough for pilgrims was not good enough for these upper class Communists.

The preference shown by so many Olympic visitors for the convents roused the envy of many more or less shady figures in Rome, who hoped to make money during the Olympiads by letting private rooms at high prices or chasing customers for second-rate hotels, which were far from filled to capacity. To the great surprise of many Romans, the Communist papers seized the opportunity to use this discontent and started a campaign in favor of these representatives of the very lowest form of capitalist speculation. They were interviewed and photographed and their bitter words about the "illegal competition" of the convents were quoted in big headlines. "Honest workers are worried about their future," said the Communist papers, "at the same time as the priests and nuns get fatter. . . ."

The Communists did not explain that if the religious institutions could offer lower prices, it was due to the fact that the members of the orders running them do most of the work themselves, even the meanest. They did not mention either that there are convents in Italy, even in Rome, which are poor to such a point that their inmates are able to eat meat only exceptionally. Indeed, some of these convents, particularly the smaller female orders, are as poor as the poorest Italian proletarians. The Italian Communists did not mention any of this, but many visitors from the Communist countries noticed it and were puzzled. Maybe this was, after all, a most insidious form of "clerical propaganda."



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# An Exchange of Views

## "Harvest in the Congo"

New York, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: In his article, "Harvest in the Congo." [Sept. 23] Mr. Daniel M. Friedenberg makes a number of statements which, to say the least, are in error. Permit me to rectify them.

1) Mr. Friedenberg says: "Leopold convinced the naive Americans that his aim was to put down slavery in Darkest Africa," thus casting doubt on the King's intentions and acts. I must remind Mr. Friedenberg that the anti-slavery campaign under the King's impulse lasted from 1888 to 1894, and resulted in the complete eradication of a plague that had ravaged Central Africa for half a century. "Render to Caesar . . ."

2) Mr. Friedenberg quotes Roger Casement and E. D. Moral, those old anti-Belgian work-horses, as witnesses. This is very unfortunate in view of the very special reputation Casement has acquired since his oh-so-intimate journals have been published.

3) Mr. Friedenberg quotes John Gunther as an authority on the "fact" that in two decades 5 to 8 million Congolese were killed. Mr. Gunther's fame for handling figures is well established. He quoted Congo exports at 3 billion dollars; the statistics show only 400 million. He put the Congo's density of population at 1.8 per sq. mile: every handbook shows it is 13 per sq. mile. For every African country mentioned in "Inside Africa" the same complete disregard for facts has been evidenced. As to the statement itself, how can any sane person with a minimum of knowledge and not consumed with the blind hatred that inspires Mr. Friedenberg imagine that in two decades a handful of white people has been responsible for such a holocaust? Who witnessed this monstrous massacre: Mr. Friedenberg states that in 1900 the population figure was higher than now. How does he know since in 1900 statistics were still in infancy? The first serious attempt at taking a census was made in 1914. In 1953, the population was 12,026,159; in 1957, it was 13,174,883. What was responsible for this increase? The tremendous work Belgium has done in the field of public health in the Congo. Does it mean nothing to Mr. Friedenberg that sleeping sickness, malaria and leprosy, besides other tropical diseases, were eliminated?

4) According to Mr. Friedenberg, the two Congolese universities were established "under pressure from the Socialists" in Belgium. He would do well to ask the Rector of the Catholic University of Louvain if he acted under pressure of the Socialist Party in creating Lovanium. A strange view of Belgian politics, indeed!

5) The Belgian disciples of Machiavelli *planned* lack of education to prevent the growth of an intelligent opposition, says Mr. Friedenberg. 1,720,000 pupils in the Congolese schools and a literacy of 45% do not seem to prove this point.

6) Belgian paratroopers terrorized the city workers, Mr. Friedenberg says. Those paratroopers must be real supermen, but they intervened only after 300 women had been raped—some of them 20 times; after girls of 10 and 12 years of age had been subjected to the same fate. They held intertribal conflicts in the Kasai down to a minimum while the U.N. troops stood by when what Mr. Hammarskjold called "an act of genocide" happened.

7) According to Mr. Friedenberg, Belgium was "squeezed from a covetous France less than 130 years ago." This is an unusual view of Belgian history. Mr. Friedenberg should know that Belgium was a national entity since the 15th century, although repeatedly under foreign rule and that Belgium revolted against her Dutch rulers in 1830.

In conclusion, let me say that Mr. Friedenberg's article would have made a wonderful text in the Security Council for Mr. Valetian A. Zorin from the U.S.S.R. or for his unfailing parrot, Mr. Bohdan Lewendowski from Poland.

I really wonder how a Catholic weekly, whose courage and intellectual independence I highly value, can publish an article which is directed not only against a Government, but against the unselfish and sometimes heroic work, thousands of Belgian Catholics have accomplished in the Congo. Mr. Friedenberg speaks about Belgian "intrusion" in the Congo. The Africans had Africa and the Congo to themselves until 1880. What did they do with it? What have the Belgians done with the Congo in 50 years? I trust that the answer to this question will be all in our favor.

JAN-ALBERT GORIS,
Commissioner of Information,
Belgian Government Information Center.

### REPLY

New York, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to reply to the letter written by Mr. Jan-Albert Goris, Commissioner of Information of the Belgian Government Information Center.

This type of letter is hardly worthy of response be-



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cause it indicts Mr. Goris himself by its extreme crudity, especially in the last two paragraphs. "When Peter talks of Paul, he tells more of Peter than Paul." But I will follow convention by replying point by point.

1) I certainly did not intend to cast doubts on King Leopold's motives. Mr. Goris is too gracious! Let there be no quibbling. I affirm that the motives were entirely mercenary and sordid. . . .

2) Mr. Goris refers in not-so-coy fashion to the fact that Roger Casement appears to have been a homosexual. This is a most peculiar argument for a civilized man. Does the Commissioner refuse to admire "The Last Supper" because the same charge was made against Leonardo da Vinci? And does he find the *Apology* of Socrates disgusting because Socrates liked to pass the time of night with young Alcibiades?

*The Encyclopedia Britannica* (14th Edition), not a stronghold of Nationalist Irish sentiment, is much more to the point: "Neither did Casement's treason in 1914-16 affect the truth of a report made in 1903."

3) I do not doubt that John Gunther made statistical errors, inevitable in a book of 952 pages replete with facts on each page. But the estimates he quotes approach those of other writers—Casement, Sjöblom, Weeks, Murphy, Frobenius—who were *there* at the time, the majority as missionaries. It was Morel who, putting together all the earlier reports, tried to estimate the population changes (E. D. Morel: *Red Rubber,* London, 1906).

And I believe it relevant, putting aside contemporary Belgian Socialist remarks, to quote Colfs, who declared from the Catholic benches during the debate in 1908 when the Belgian Parliament annexed the Congo: ". . . from 1895 onwards the conspiracy against truth has been organized from top to bottom, under well-nigh unbelievable conditions, in order to hide the crimes which are committed in the Congo."

4) Don't pretend to be naive, Mr. Goris. You know, as well as I, that Catholic education is subsidized by the Belgian State in the Congo. It was a *State* decision that set up Lovanium. I quote back to your own phrase: "A strange view of Belgian politics, indeed!"

5) Do not misquote me. I said: "the Belgians refused to give any *higher* education to the Negro populace." I would like to remind you that if free discourse is to uphold the values we consider dear in the free world, it is only possible when based on honesty.

6) I do not know whether 300 women were raped once each or 100 women three times: the Belgian government was going to indict the Congolese in front of the United Nations, but so far has not put its case. According to dispatches in the New York *Times,* the rape figures were greatly exaggerated.

This is not, of course, to excuse rapists. . . . But I would like to point out that the Congo is the *only country* attaining freedom in Africa where such outbreaks occurred. That should give food for reflection to the Commissioner.

In 1954 (See The Commonweal, Sept. 17, 1954) Mr. Goris violently attacked a previous article I had written on the Belgian Congo in your journal. Part of his conclusion was ". . . nowhere in Africa is the native population being better treated and happier than there." Maybe the natives were only expressing their sorrow on the departure of the happiness-providers!

7) France wanted to absorb Belgium from the time of Louis XIV, and Louis XV actually occupied the country for three years. The French Revolution succeeded where the Sun King had failed and Belgium was integrated into France from 1795 until the fall of Napoleon.

It was English strategy that united Belgium to Holland, since British imperial policy was bent on smashing French influence. But the religious difference between the two Low Countries was too strong, and Belgium refused to subordinate itself to the Dutch monarchy. The Belgians revolted and, to quote *The Encyclopedia Britannica* again, " . . . a conference of ambassadors was called in London. The main object was to avert a European war, which would have been the inevitable consequence if France had intervened in Belgium." It was only then, in 1831, the conference decided that Belgium should be an independent state.

Pardon the brief historical review, but as Mr. Goris is fond of quoting, "Render to Caesar . . . . "

As to the charge that my article would have made a wonderful text for the Soviets, this type of remark is so beneath contempt I will not stoop to answer the innuendo. My writing stands up for itself.

The last paragraph of Mr. Goris' letter is perhaps the most amazing . . . and revealing. We are told that a Catholic weekly of "courage and intellectual independence" should not publish an article "directed not only against a Government, but against the unselfish and sometimes heroic work thousands of Belgian Catholics have accomplished in the Congo."

Since it is obvious that Mr. Goris would welcome articles directed against the Soviet Union or its satellites, he seems to mean against a Western government; and further, since he refers to the acknowledgedly magnificent work the Belgian Catholic missionaries have done in the Congo (and not the Protestant missionaries, of which there are many), it seems apparent that he objects most specifically to criticism of a Catholic government or one employed in Catholic missionary work.

Does Mr. Goris mean that The Commonweal should demonstrate its "courage and intellectual independence" only by applauding the work of Catholic nations and groups, insofar as they are Catholic, and by no other standard? That The Commonweal, therefore, should not criticize Catholic governments like Haiti and the



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Dominican Republic? Or countries such as Spain and Portugal which still are engaged in important missionary activity? Does Mr. Goris mean that "Catholic morality" is separate from "morality," that is, that the definition of Catholic is the reverse of Universal?

As for the penultimate charge, what the Belgians have done with the Congo, the Congolese seem to be answering quite well for themselves these days. . . .

I find the mentality of Mr. Jan-Albert Goris fascinating because it reveals such an ignorance of what is happening in the world today. In this, it is indeed representative of the entire Belgian policy in the Congo since World War II. I am reminded of an aphorism about the late Col. McCormick: "He has the finest mind of the 17th century."

DANIEL M. FRIEDENBERG.

# THE SCREEN

## NOT IN OUR STARS

IN TELLING the story of rocket-expert Wernher von Braun, the makers of "I Aim at the Stars" had more problems than could be solved satisfactorily in one movie. Their hero was not only a great scientist and man of vision but also a practical man who perfected for the Germans the V-2 rocket that wrecked so much of England. Von Braun was born in 1912; and the film covers his life from the 1920's when young Wernher became interested in the stars, through the '30s when he worked on experiments for the German Space Rocket Society and then became technical director of the Peenemunde Rocket Center, where he developed the V-2 that set London in flames. It takes him through World War II, near the end of which he and many of his co-workers surrendered to the Americans, and finally well into the '50s, when the scientist, now an American, directed the launching of Explorer I into orbit. Most of the picture takes place in Germany and scriptwriter Jay Dratler has some difficulty in justifying von Braun and his activities as a Nazi, although the script goes out of its way to make clear that von Braun was not interested "in all this party stuff" and preferred the man-in-the-moon to Hitler.

"I Aim at the Stars" has other problems than selling von Braun to audiences who may be eager to applaud this former enemy's achievements in space. Since the film is about the man *and* his rockets, it has to show experiments and launchings, failures as well as successes, and some of these scenes begin to take on a static sameness that makes the picture drag. Charles H. Schneer has come up with a good production, set in Germany and the United States; and director J. Lee Thompson has tried to get movement and even suspense into a film that is largely exposition. Their greatest asset is Curt Jurgens who gives an underplayed though quite effective performance in the lead role. In the large supporting cast are, among others, Herbert Lom, Gia Scala, Victoria Shaw and James Daly, who portrays an American major who resents von Braun and considers him a war criminal. Perhaps an interesting study in depth could be done on this man of science whose concern is less in human values than in the whole universe. But I doubt if cinema is the medium for it.

THERE ARE human stars aplenty in "Midnight Lace," a slick, handsome mystery thriller with a cast that should make film fans' eyes pop. Most of the popular actors portray suspects in the strange series of events that befall an American heiress (Doris Day) living with her husband (Rex Harrison) in London. The poor girl is driven out of her wits by telephone calls threatening death—and by several mishaps that seem to be attempts to carry out the threats. Indeed, her husband and her aunt (Myrna Loy) and a Scotland Yard inspector (John Williams) have a vague notion that Doris may already be witless since only she hears the weird voices. Director David Miller works hard to whip Doris into a frenzy, and so do the fancy cast


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which includes John Gavin, Roddy McDowall, Herbert Marshall, Natasha Parry, Hermione Baddeley, Rhys Williams, Richard Ney, and several others. The plot is rather thin, but Ross Hunter and Martin Melcher have given their picture such an elaborate production in color, and Doris Day is driven to such distraction, and Myrna Loy is so bright that "Midnight Lace" succeeds as an entertainment.

AS A STUDY in criminology, the Swiss film, "It Happened in Broad Daylight," is more convincing but less entertaining. It has a painful story about a police inspector who feels sure that the suspected murderer of a little girl is not the guilty man. When this suspect, a peddler, commits suicide and the authorities close the case, the inspector determines to find the real murderer. How he does this, with the help of a few clues, the deductions of a psychiatrist about the unknown killer, and a trap set up with another little girl as bait, makes for a cerebral, though often chilling movie.

Friedrich Duerrenmatt, who first wrote this story for the movie and then later published it as *The Pledge,* has brought to the film some of the cynicism and calm, slow-moving horror of his more famous play, "The Visit." The movie mixes the everyday factual with the macabre; and the effect is doubly frightening. The inspector, skillfully played by Heinz Ruhmann, seems to be dull and plodding in his slow thoroughness. The guiltless peddler (Michel Simon) becomes a victim of men's stupidity and meanness. The murderer (Gert Frobe) is a sinister psychopath. Obviously "It Happened in Broad Daylight," with its good acting and fine black-and-white photography of the Swiss countryside, is no ordinary thriller; but neither is it entirely successful as a film. Director Ladislao Vajda allows it to move too slowly and seems determined not to give it any warmth. But as a cold, analytical study, it is fascinating.

ANOTHER IMPORT that doesn't quite come off is "The Entertainer," the English film made from the play by John Osborne who has now collaborated on the script with Nigel Kneale. This movie, with its story about a seedy and passé entertainer in fading and second-rate music halls in a run-down seaside resort town, may be regarded as symbolic of the once-glorious Great Britain on the decline or it may be seen as little more than an expertly-acted exposé of a group of shoddy people.

Laurence Olivier gives a magnificent performance as Archie Rice, the song-and-dance man who refuses to face reality, who continues to give out with the stale jokes and put up a front even after the audience is no longer with him. When his son is taken prisoner fighting in the Middle East, Archie starts a cheap affair with a beauty contest runner-up. When his son is killed, Archie plans a new show that will mix Billy Rice, Archie's father who was once a headliner, and a lot of nudes. All ends in failure that even Archie has to recognize at the end.

Although Archie is a heel and at times a tiresome fool, there is a sadness about him and his hopeless dreams. And the people around Archie add to the depressing picture with their own sad dreams. These people too are brilliantly played: Brenda De Banzie as his wife uses gin and movies to evade reality; Joan Plowright as his daughter is running from an unhappy romance; Roger Livesey as his father, a man of some dignity, impatient with the Welfare State, but with compassion for the aimless younger generation; Alan Bates is Archie's other son, brought up backstage, but the one in the family bright enough not to fall for Archie's vanity and schemes—he will be able to escape to Canada.

Archie Rice is not an angry young man; he's the kind of empty old man that the young man has a right to be angry about. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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## MAGIC FOR FUTURE MEMORY

I remember the shallow infrequent hills
Of childhood
And one rare perfect night when all the fates
Conspired to send us flying under stars
Whose light reflected snow by day,
Now magically transformed at dark
To a world we'd never tread.

I remember one hill and one night
And the odor and color and light
Of a new sled,
A blue transfigured hill
And our voices
Now not random calling
But ceremony we'd perform for unknown audience:
Ourselves in future lands and time.

I remember it was dark
And no one called us home,
As though we lived within a world
Of night alone and only stars as guide,
Our parents dead or gone to other
Climates who could not know our time
But knew to be content,
Their children lost
In magic feat for magic audience
That lives till each of us has lost
Remembrance.

MARGERY BARNETT.



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# One of the Greats of Yiddish Literature

**THE BOOK OF FIRE. By I. L. Peretz. Translated by Joseph Leftwich. Yoseloff. $6.**

By THOMAS CURLEY

MR. LEFTWICH prefaces his translation of this new volume of Peretz in English with a lengthy introduction which I put off reading until I had fully savored the stories. An introduction to a writer is usually less satisfying than a direct encounter: you learn more, have fewer pre-judgments, favorable or not, if you meet him as you would a stranger on the street. This is especially true of Peretz who tells a good story, always keeping it short and to the point. As an introduction to Yiddish literature, he may well be the most accessible of the great Yiddish triad, the other two being Mendele and Shalom Aleichem.

Let me single out one story, "The Sacrifice," as an example of Peretz's clarity and grace. It is less than three pages long and yet the tang of the whole volume is here. It begins: "Once upon a time there was a great lord who had a palace among gardens by the edge of the sea." This lord had two daughters, Sarah and Rebecca, and was himself a widower. Sarah was pious, busying herself in the service of the synagogue; Rebecca was devoted to her father. The lord wanted his daughters to marry. One day a boat approached the shore, carrying a young man who lay senseless. Immediately Sarah began to care for him; the lord rode to town for a doctor; Rebecca, because he was so handsome, went into the garden to pick flowers for him. Then the Angel of Death came for the young man's soul. Sarah pleaded and purchased a few minutes of life for him with her lovely black hair. A few minutes later he came back and Sarah purchased a few minutes more for the young man by surrendering all her colors: the white of her body, the red of her lips, the blue of her eyes. Finally, the angel agreed to accept her life for his. He told her to go into her room and lie down. As Sarah died, Rebecca entered the sick room, her arms full of flowers. The young man opened his eyes.

" 'My love' he cried."

" 'My love' she answered."

There are other stories less to my taste, "The Tailor's Story" and "Tea Feast of the Sabbath Queen," for example. In both stories, Peretz brings his characters to the brink of destruction, through their betrayal of religious duties, only to end his story by revealing that their sin had been in dream only.

In his introduction, Mr. Leftwich mentions some of the adverse criticisms of Peretz. He was, said his detractors, a writer of ideas, not of living people; the Anatole France of Yiddish writing. Peretz was the Abstractionist; Shalom Aleichem, the creator of living people. There are, however, a number of ways of being abstract and I think that Peretz at his best justifies his method. "There were generations

---

## DAUGHTER OF EVE

BY SISTER MARY HONORA, O.S.F.

She
was both
repelled and
attracted to the
cozenings of a be-
guiler. Heretofore the in-
nate charm and urge of honor no
liberty defined. Sauntering along
the familiar path, she turned again
to gaze upon a tree, noting its quixotic
hallmark. With yearning, she dallied; first circumspectly
and then wantonly. Making a semicircle, she halted
by the fruit, lifting an indulgent hand to pick the apple.
In studied grace, her fingertips fondled long the flattering
skin. One little tug, and then a sudden flirt; upward
snapped the stem, leaving a pretty smoothness in
her palm. Time yet to toss it far, before the
pungent fragrance of the bitter sweet delec-
tability allure the tongue
and shatter integrity
Time did not limp.
The loadstone of
the luscious glove
surpassed at once
the interdict.
All too quickly did the western sky grow dark. Dew and
chill palled heavily over the arbor. And she—she
shuddered, hearing within herself a click that once closed
Eden's gate. Her garden too, was empty of its God.
An accusing moonlight
silhouetted a rood
in the apple branches
trickling with redemptive
stars. Eve's daughter arose.



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of loveliness in those old Jewish institutions," Peretz wrote. "They are the things of the folk, in which the folk made their dreams flesh." And he goes on to say these things had been blunted. "We must sharpen what has become blunted." In this sense, Peretz is abstract, but his ideas, his symbols, if they do not have the amplitude of Shalom Aleichem's figure, are nevertheless lifelike since they arise from a full and loving knowledge of the Jews and their folk-history.

Mr. Leftwich is to be thanked for this work, but I have some doubts as to the wisdom of his lengthy introduction. The Yiddish reader will find it superfluous; the non-Yiddish reader, confronted with references to and quotations from a great number of critics and scholars will probably be confused rather than instructed. But that is a small matter. The stories are here.

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# All Ambivalent

**THE NEPHEW. By James Purdy. Farrar, Strauss & Cudahy. $3.95.**

By MARTIN TUCKER

A PROBLEM NOVEL in which the problem is never solved, Purdy's latest book is in many ways a departure from the fey and fantastic humor for which he has become celebrated. If he mystified people and won many fans by *Malcolm,* he may gain some dissenters with this relatively simple novel of compassion and small-town humors. The nephew, unlike Malcolm, has few adventures, and the only one he has which is of dramatic consequence remains shrouded in Purdy's dialectical ambivalence.

In an unfair but accurate summary, the central problem is whether the nephew is a homosexual. His old-maid aunt and widowed uncle, who live together in a big, stuffed house, have taken care of the nephew from the time he was orphaned to the time he enters the army. When they are informed that Cliff is missing in action, their world collapses. In an attempt to keep Cliff's presence alive, the aunt decides to write a memorial about him. But in trying to write down on paper the things that made up Cliff, she discovers she knows almost nothing about the only person she has loved.

In her search for the knowledge of Cliff's identity, the aunt begins to learn compassion through the discovery of many damning facts, or suggestions which might be facts (Purdy is extremely careful to be vague and ambivalent, as if he were carrying the theory of indeterminate reality into every home in America). Among these facts are the cane from which a rich widow drinks her daily alcohol, and the Baker house where a young male secretary takes care of his older, dissipated male employer. The old-maid aunt, who used to be a bossy grade school teacher, is, in Purdy's eyes, discovering life.

Such a theme — self-discovery through understanding of friend or lover—is as old and valid as the first novel written. Where Purdy fails this time is in employing only sincerity and an extraordinary writing style in which every sentence seems the result of centuries of meditation. People also are needed for a novel. The plain fact is that the central character, Aunt Alma, is just not very interesting in the manner Purdy presents her. If she were a better woman, she would gain sympathy; if she were worse, she might exact a vulgar and lusty fascination. Remaining a narrow-minded, naive, lonely old woman, she is only pitiable. It is not so much that Aunt Alma is simple; the trouble is that Purdy simplifies her. She is closer to a type than an individual; her distance and mystery come not from complexity but from a lack of specific motivations. For instance, early in the novel Purdy says: "during the four or five years he [Cliff] had lived with them in Rainbow Center, Alma was away teaching school in another town. . . ." Surely the aunt—and Purdy—know whether it was four or five years. There should be no vagueness on such a point.

The vagueness, however, is intentional: it reflects a careful, studied attitude. Vagueness, in all of Purdy's short stories and novels, is at the center of experience, and Purdy's literary tactics are always to skirt the center, where pain and nothingness lie in wait. Instead, Purdy tells his story through the sidelines, just as most of his characters live their lives, or the most important moments in their lives, when they are reflecting on what others are doing. In this novel, the nephew is never seen, and the reader finds out little about him. Is he a homosexual? Purdy doesn't say. Did he love his aunt or hate her? Purdy doesn't say. But the novel is concerned with these questions, and the structure of the novel is as much a wandering journey as *Ulysses.* Only, unlike Joyce's book, there is no Daedalus, and Bloom is old Aunt Alma.

Also, what Purdy lacks is a conclusion, a Molly Bloom episode, some way of gathering up the shells picked up on the trip. He tries for this in a final scene between Alma and the richest woman in town—two characters separated by personality who are reconciled by the desire to understand the need for and the course of love. This scene is probably the most emotionally engaging in the book, but it is not a statement or a conclusion. It is a further investigation, and the center, the issue of the nephew's identity, remains nebulous.

Yet this technique—the search for understanding—worked wonders in *Malcolm* where the hero was looking for his father, or fathers (perhaps this is Purdy's Daedalus). In that book, however, Purdy exploited his fey sense of fantastic humor to make the improbable and absurd reveal perceptions about more mundane matters. In *The Nephew,* he tries for compassion and high seriousness with such earnestness that he verges, on sentimentality one moment and on vagueness the next. As a matter of fact, his generous attempt to portray the commonplaces of life (including homosexuality) may earn him the dubious distinction of making the commonplace seem odd, and the queer, ordinary.



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# Vintage White

FAREWELL VICTORIA. By T. H. White. Putnam's Sons. $3.50.

By MAX COSMAN

ADD TO THE fact that the musical, "Camelot," is based on *The Once and Future King,* his tour de force on King Arthur, T. H. White now has the satisfaction of seeing an earlier novel re-issued for what should certainly be another round of pleasure for readers.

*Farewell Victoria,* the work in question, originally came out early in Mr. White's career, that is, in 1933. It was his fourth book and the critics greeted it with the sort of comment usually reserved for a writer that is not unknown but is not yet important. They noted some obvious things like his predilection for the semi-feudal life on large estates in England during the second half of the nineteenth century and some less overt ones: his attempt to do what Noel Coward had done in "Cavalcade"; his ability to dissolve view into view just as the motion picture people did. And they agreed, of course, that he had a tranquil, nostalgic charm.

All of which was, and for that matter still is, true, and deserves to be repeated—with this addition; that informing the irony, the sense of justice, the belief in class hierarchy, the feeling for man and nature, the apprehension of time, existence, and the sea there is the empathic understanding special to Mr. White.

It is this especial quality which makes the opening of *Farewell Victoria,* a description of a rabbit at dawn, memorable even as we go on with the book's major concern with its simple hero. It is this which gives immediacy and poignancy to the reporting of events like the far-off, now forgotten victory of the Zulus at the Battle of Isandula. It is this too that, to take a term from yet another of Mr. White's favored eras, adds "bottom" to the novel, turning what would otherwise be a slight work into one which has metal and weight.

Basically *Farewell Victoria* is a series of vignettes-cum-essays centering about a certain Mundy, a son of a groom, then groom himself, then coachman and cabman after service in an English imperialistic war, and finally groom again—the whole of it set against an historic panorama extending from the eighteen-sixties to our own thirties.

There is no antipathy, however, between private annal and public chronicle as they move on their appointed ways. Accurately but unpedantically, emotionally yet sensibly, they work together to create a human being authentic for his time and place.

Mundy's elementary experiences with Ellen have the Victorian background represented by Sir William; his maturer relationship with Alice, the Edwardian period of the eccentric Countess Jaresky; and his pathetic decline and uncomplaining death, our own century of un-aristocratic, nay according to the text, communized masses. Indeed, taken politically, *Farewell Victoria* is Mr. White's considered attack on present-day civilization for what he calls its "expulsion of the first person singular," that is, its destruction of the individual.

This Thoreauvian indictment, to which the final section of the book is devoted, should not fail to impress all of us who are troubled by the submissive trends in social behavior brought to light by such recent studies as *The Organization Man* and *The Hidden Persuaders,* among others.

# Better Go Back

IS THERE AN AMERICAN IN THE HOUSE? By David Cort. Macmillan. $3.95

By MICHAEL NOVAK

DAVID CORT'S recent book is mainly a collection of articles from *The Nation, The Western World, Harper's, The Commonweal* and other magazines. Mr. Cort himself comes through the book as a man of spirit in search of rest. Of America he writes: "[this] writer has nowhere he can go back to, even if you disagree with him. If you have a place you can go back to, to get away from all this, better go back."

Mr. Cort's arguments seem illustrative of the mood of many men of integrity as they face the America of supermarkets, advertising, profits, and alienation. The gap between the reality of life and the world of advertising appalls them. The artificiality of American journalism, the Madison Avenue maxims that dictate the public face and public proceedings of businesses, the government, religions, twist and torment them. How can a man of reality breathe, in this stifling, fetid air?—this air of false excitement

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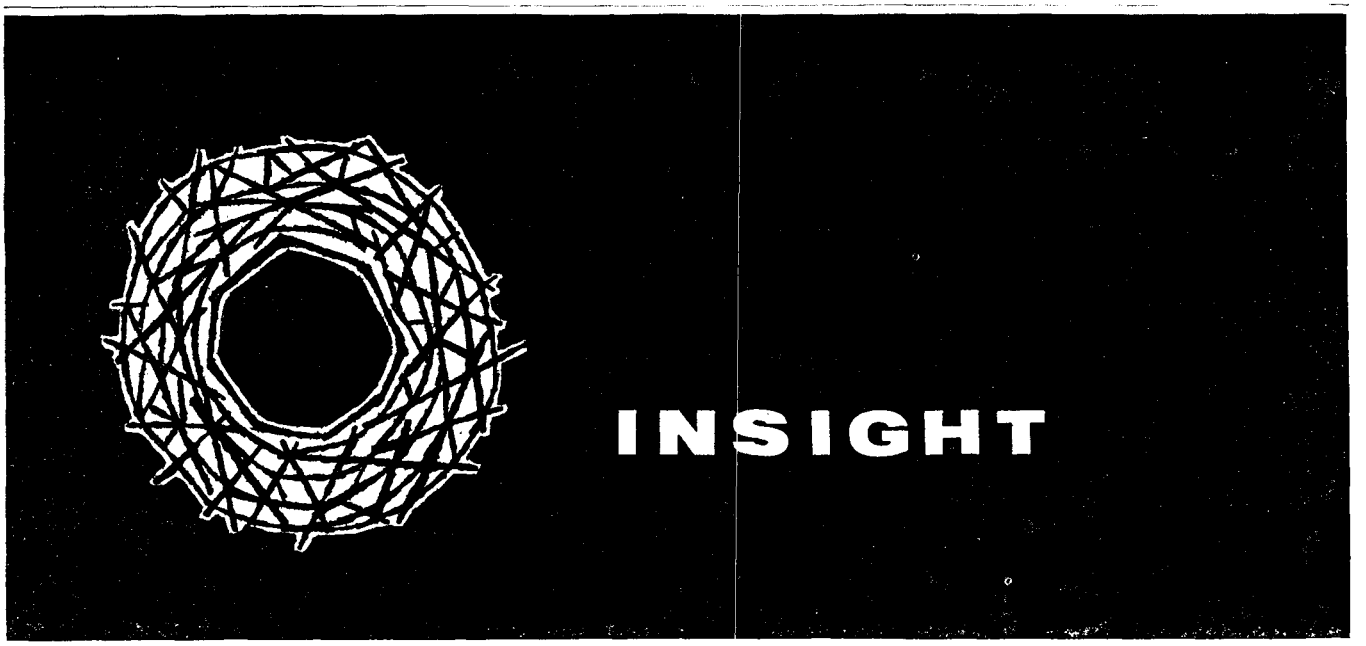
over false issues, this vicious circle of: "capture the market" and "give the public what they want."

Mr. Cort is a former writer and editor for Time, Inc.; he is at his best describing the workings and spirit of America's mass publishing. His noting that the large-circulation color-plate magazines sell to the readers for *less* than cost reveals the frightening hold of the advertisers over America's image of herself, over her communications, over her intimate life. Mr. Cort's contempt is great for the misinformation and ignorance that can masquerade under the bright jargon and enforced optimism of the public relations world. He manifests alarm and intense personal compassion for the forty thousand Americans murdered each year by automobiles —because of our society's emotional need for unrestricted power. He writes with concern of the heedless waste of America's underground water resources, and of the inconceivably thoughtless risks run by spraying crops with the various little-tested types of DDT. He writes with bitter insight of the war between the men's and women's magazines in America.

Perhaps some of his most poignant pages are the vignettes he catches of the imprisoned and superficial American—the beatnik type standing alienated on the fire escape, trying to appear unmoved and isolated, lighting a cigarette as if not to notice the fire and the crowd; the man in the bar who *knows* the Series is fixed, whom nobody has the courage or sense or conviction to challenge.

Mr. Cort catches the rottenness that has penetrated to the heart of America, and that rottenness is submission to falsehood. From the White House and Pentagon to Madison Avenue, from the National Association of Manufacturers to businessmen's conventions to churches where the pitch is mediocrity and comfort, American society is engaged in the mammoth task of letting itself be convinced that all is well, men are happy, things are "looking up." America is chronically afraid of death. It is, as Mr. Cort observes, afraid of sex—even the popularity of Westerns should indicate that. How afraid of reality can a society become and still endure? Life is transitory; events are contingent; pain enters every life; man is made for woman and woman for man, not in a dream of bliss but in the ordinary jarrings of person upon person. The advertising that is obsessed with the avoidance of age and death, which mocks truth by tempting people to eat what they do not need, and to diet to a youthfulness they cannot maintain, is not only a symptom; it flows from the entire superficial soul of the false America.

Yet there is another America than the America of Madison Avenue, Hollywood, or Washington. It is the America that produces such critics as David Cort. It is also the America of the highly moral families, the families of religious tradition, or the families of civilized secular tradition. There are great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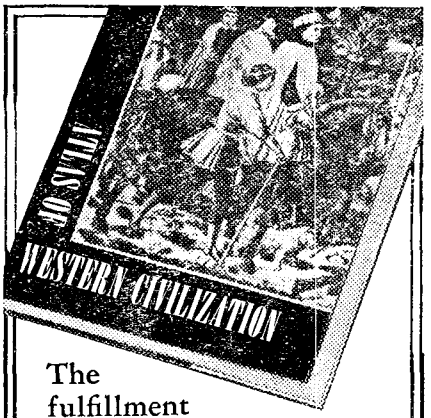


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areas of America on which the tissue of lies lays without smothering, like the fine netting over the tobacco fields of Connecticut. In those areas, integrity is alive. And if ever the good people of these areas, often not well-educated, often unsophisticated even if educated, meet with spokesmen like David Cort and other critics—if ever the two groups find each other instead of suspecting one another—America may throw over her masters of artifice and present to the world her true and more selfless, more dedicated image. The split between the liberal intellectuals and the people is the crippling tragedy of mid-century America.

**REVIEWERS**

**Thomas F. Curley is the author of the recently published novel *It's A Wise Child*.**

**Martin Tucker, a previous contributor, is a teacher and editor.**

**Max Cosman is a frequent contributor to various American critical and scholarly journals.**

**Michael Novak has written for *Perspectives* and the *Downside Review*, as well as for The Commonweal.**

**RECORDS**

# New Opera Albums

THE TIME has come—and frankly we welcome it—to say a good word for the soprano Maria Callas. In the past we have not hesitated to criticize her for her brutalization of such roles as Butterfly and Mimi and for some of the more unpleasant results when she presses her voice at its upper registers.

But in Miss Callas' most recent album, "La Gioconda" (Angel), she recaptures the glory that was hers in "Tosca," "Lucia" and "Norma." She demonstrates again her great intelligence as it relates to both the dramatic and musical aspects of her role.

By turns contemptuous, tender, suppliant and arrogant, Miss Callas uses her voice with consummate mastery. Her characterization is superb. It unfolds and unfolds until in the end she has given us a complete, multi-dimensioned Gioconda—credible, plausible, real.

In few operatic performances can it be said that one singer lifted the level of her colleagues. Miss Callas clearly accomplishes that feat in the present recording. Piero Cappuccilli, for example, begins his Barnaba with competence, but somewhat woodenly. Before he is through, however, Cappuccilli's characterization rises far above the mark of mere straightforward competence. Barnaba glows and throbs.

One can only conclude that Miss Callas, despite her own views on the matter, is not equally qualified for every soprano role in the Italian repertoire. As a matter of fact, she is at her greatest in the more dramatically demanding roles, those that require an intensity and a range of emotion beyond the abilities and grasp of most sopranos of our generation.

Antonino Votto's pacing of the performance is excellent, and he has kept his orchestral and choral ensembles at the pitch of dramatic excitement and interest set by Miss Callas.

One of the disappointing operatic albums is the new "Turandot" headed by Birgit Nilsson, Renata Tebaldi, Jussi Bjoerling, Giorgio Tozzi and Erich Leinsdorf leading the Rome Opera House Orchestra and Chorus (Victor). On the plus side is the clear, clean-lined singing of the late Jussi Bjoerling, whose voice in recent years has frequently sounded tired and frayed and has not taken kindly to being pushed. Tebaldi as Liu and Bjoerling as Calaf bring to their roles an appealingly lyrical lissomeness.

Miss Nilsson's work is another matter, and since the opera rises or falls on the characterization of the title role, her weakness here is critical. One can forgive certain natural and temperamental deficiencies in a singer if there is compensation elsewhere. Miss Nilsson's



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leaden-paced, stolid characterization is not redeemed by her vocal performance.

The Callas-Schwarzkopf-Serafin recording (Angel) remains the preferred edition of the work even though it is available only monophonically.

A most affecting "Barber of Seville," Giovanni Paisiello's, which antedates the more familiar Rossini "Barber" by 34 years, is given a delightful performance by a group of Italian singers (none of them "headliners") and the Virtuosi di Roma conducted by Renato Fasano (Mercury). The singers include Sciutti, Monti, Panerai, Capecchi and Petri.

This "Barber" was written in 1782. It anticipates Italian opera of the next generation in its set little arias, for which, one suspects, these works were written in the first place. But here the artificiality of the structure is more amusing than irritating. And, even more importantly, Paisiello's music reflects the soft light and air of the Mediterranean landscape; it is reminiscent of the lovely notturni that Mozart and his contemporaries in Italy had written for the diversion of the nobility on a summer evening.

The Virtuosi di Roma, whom one ordinarily associates only with baroque chamber music, demonstrate here their amazing versatility. Obviously musical competence in one direction does not obstruct competence in another.

A final opera album, "Il Trovatore" (Victor) surpasses its only stereo rival (London) in terms of drive and dramatic characterization, possibly because most of the principals are relatively new to their roles. Only the late Leonard Warren had been a veteran of this repertoire. His portrayal of the Count di Luna had long been one of his specialties.

But the rest are "young" in their roles—Leontyne Price as Leonora, Tozzi as Ferrando, Rosalind Elias as Azucena, Richard Tucker as Manrico. And the 46-year-old conductor, Arturo Basile, has recorded here his first complete Verdi opera.

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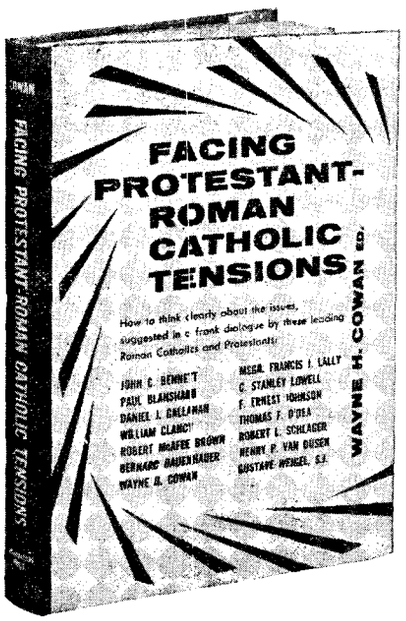
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